

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

In the Matter of: *
*
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PRESENT:

BARRY STRAUCH, NTSB
BILL WOODY, NTSB
TOM ROTH-ROFFY, NTSB

INTERVIEW OF:

JOHN BYRON

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MR. STRAUCH: What we are trying to do right
3 now is, if you don't mind, we would like to record
4 this. Do you have any, any, is that okay with you, to
5 record our conversation?

6 MR. BYRON: No problem.

7 MR. STRAUCH: Okay. Thank you, John.

8 MR. BYRON: Can you hear me okay?

9 MR. STRAUCH: Yes, can you hear us okay? Can
10 you hear us okay, John?

11 MR. BYRON: Yes.

12 MR. STRAUCH: Okay. Well, I guess you know
13 why we called from, from our e-mails, and I mean, you
14 raised some very, very interesting points in the
15 articles that you wrote. And it was particularly
16 timely because we are about to look into the issue of
17 oversight in the investigation of the Greeneville
18 collision. And you raise some very interesting points
19 that we wanted to ask you about. And I guess we will
20 start off with, if you were in our position, what kinds
21 of issues would you be looking at, who would you be
22 talking to and what kinds of questions would you ask?

23 MR. BYRON: Let me try this in two dimensions.
24 One, that we need, we need to talk about this minute.

1 I will answer your question second. But, we probably
2 ought to talk, if you guys have time for a little
3 background.

4 If you understand, I won't say politics,
5 although that is probably the right word, the
6 distribution of the force field dealing with submarine
7 issues in the Navy, which, which influences how things
8 happen in the Submarine Force. We will get back to
9 the -- I think that the questions need to be asked are
10 the, first of all, the five questions that I posed and
11 I think you have them, yes?

12 MR. STRAUCH: Yes, I do.

13 MR. BYRON: Okay. I think you should, I think
14 those are a very basic set of questions dealing with
15 Greeneville, Ehime Maru, with Greeneville at Saipan,
16 with Greeneville bumping into the Ogden, with a whole
17 bunch of things of this. And I, those questions are
18 basic one and they ought to have answers when there is
19 a serious incident.

20 As an aside, you might also ask whoever you
21 talk to, whether they think that was a serious incident
22 or not. Opinions seem to vary. The Submarine Force
23 sort of puts it in the category, well, we walked away
24 from it, it must have been a good landing. Whereas,

1 the American people, the Japanese Government, and, and
2 any objective, absolute view of what we were saying was
3 pretty damn serious, indeed. That is just an aside.

4 The, the second thing you want to ask if you
5 buy in on the validity of those five questions is, is
6 not only one of the answers, but what have you done to
7 deal with those questions or questions that amount to
8 the same thing? Who do you ask? I think there are two
9 places that you have to ask. And the third place you
10 might want to and this gets to the politics, the Force
11 Field Distribution. I think you have to absolutely
12 have to ask Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific
13 Fleet, John Padgett, Bobby Brandhuber, Tom Kyle, I
14 guess that is his name, if he is still the training
15 officer there, etc. They will have answers to that.
16 They are the folks in charge of the whole thing. They
17 did the investigation, etc., etc. If you go to PAC
18 Fleet, you are going too high. If you go to Squadron
19 One, you have gone too low. I would hit SUBPAC's front
20 door.

21 MR. STRAUCH: Okay.

22 MR. BYRON: There is a second place to go
23 also. And I think this is a change since the time of
24 the accident and probably when your investigation

1 opened. The Chief of Naval Operations has revised the
2 Navy structure and organization. What he has done is
3 take smaller type commands in the bigger ocean, and
4 make them subservient to the bigger type commands in
5 the smaller ocean, and there is a whole bunch of words
6 and charts that goes with this. But, basically two
7 star John Pagdett, ComSubPAC, now has a fairly sturdy
8 dotted line function to three star John Grossenbacher,
9 Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet. It is
10 with a different hat that Grossenbacher does this.
11 But, Grossenbacher is in charge of standardizing the
12 way the Submarine Force does business in the fleet,
13 which is something that is new. It is also something I
14 am told on background is not sitting real well with the
15 guys in Makelaka Crater and at SUBPAC. But, that is
16 the way it is.

17 So, in addition to talking to SUBPAC and its
18 minions, it is probably for other reasons worthwhile to
19 get back down to Squadron One. Mostly having to do
20 with, with, as an aside now, mostly having to do with:
21 "You had a bad accident, you did a personnel transplant
22 at the top. Then you had another accident, you fired
23 the skipper, XO, the navigator, and the assistant
24 navigator and now you have had yet another accident.

1 Are you guys paying any attention at all?" I think
2 those are useful questions.

3 But, I think you need to go to Lant Fleet, to
4 Grossenbacher and ask what his view is of those
5 questions and the Greeneville accident. What it means
6 from a force process, procedure, documentation,
7 organization? The sort of stuff that, that you guys
8 look at.

9 MR. STRAUCH: Okay. Now in one of your
10 articles you did say something about Admiral Fargo and
11 what he should have done. And you criticized Admiral
12 Fargo. But, you said just now that going to Admiral
13 Fargo would be too high.

14 MR. BYRON: Well, that was, that was in real
15 time, as this thing, as the first Greeneville collision
16 was unfolding, my criticism of Tom Fargo go in two
17 directions or two topics. And one, they are deeply
18 interrelated. I think he should have court-martialed
19 the guy rather than gone to an Admiral's Mast and a
20 Court of Inquiry. And the reason is because Rules of
21 Evidence apply. It is an adversarial process. And the
22 only way you get all of the issues out on the table, I
23 think, is through a court marital process rather than
24 the other way. There are two parties in opposition to

1 each other at a court marital and one party can't
2 control the outcome as happened in a major way, I
3 think, in this one.

4 The other thing is I think he stopped, as I
5 said precisely in the article, he stopped well short of
6 investigating causes.

7 MR. STRAUCH: And why do you think he did
8 that?

9 MR. BYRON: My opinion, I think, I had the
10 impression all along they were kind of like deer in the
11 headlights. Can we turn the recorder off for just a
12 minute?

13 MR. STRAUCH: Sure. Standby.

14 (Off the record.)

15 MR. STRAUCH: Hold on. Okay. It is restarting
16 now. We are back on the record.

17 MR. BYRON: All right, thanks.

18 I think you, Gentlemen, should consider in
19 addition to certainly talking to the guys in Oahu and
20 my recommendation is go to Norfolk and talk to
21 Grossenbacher and his people. That you should also
22 consider an interview or discussion, expanded
23 discussion with Admiral Skip Bowen and the people at
24 Naval Reactors. The reason I say that is because (a)

1 he is the senior submariner in the Navy. The second
2 senior active duty officer in the Navy. And his
3 position in life doesn't show up on an org chart that
4 way at all, but his position in life is that what he
5 says and what he thinks has gigantic influence in what
6 submariners and the Submarine Force do. Naval
7 Reactors is, you know, this is the, as I know you know
8 well, is the old Rickover shop. They seem to have an
9 agenda that, that, that is very, very protective of
10 submarine programs, submarine budgets. It is a dicey
11 time. Funds are going down, appropriations are down, a
12 lot of pressure on the Fed's budget. The new stuff, the
13 48 billion or whatever comes in now, new, will be, will
14 be certainly sopped up rapidly. And the truth is, my
15 private opinion, it is awfully hard to justify attack
16 submarines in this day and age. Everything that they
17 do well ain't needed. And everything else they do is
18 probably done better with other platforms like launch
19 Tomahawks and crap like that. Admiral Bowman's got a
20 tough job. He is trying to protect programs. He is
21 trying to protect the Virginia-class new attack
22 submarine. Same stuff, in Trident class and the SSGN
23 conversion. Keeps as many boats in existence as
24 possible, in commission as possible, etc., etc. And

1 this was not, the 9th of February action, the
2 Greeneville, was not something that made his day at
3 all.

4 I think that he probably -was working in two
5 directions, one with the guys in Hawaii saying, "For
6 Christ's sake, keep this as low as possible, contained."

7 And the second was probably with the Chief of Naval
8 Operations, same topic. And I would guess that maybe
9 part of the reason that the CNO sealed up the PR
10 aspects of this very early on.

11 MR. STRAUCH: The CNO, that would be --

12 MR. BYRON: The CNO, as I understand it, was
13 controlling this in Washington. Tom Fargo's instinct
14 was to get everything out that he could as fast he
15 could. He got shutdown on this. And as a consequence,
16 a portion of the Navy looked like a bunch of idiots in
17 front of the American public until finally the info was
18 released.

19 Oh, the two questions you have asked, is what
20 to ask and where to ask them? I think what you ask in
21 summary is, is starts with the five questions I had,
22 and what have you guys, done about these specifically
23 or these topics in general, to look at the underlying
24 root causes for this. Is it your contention this is a

1 one of a kind, if so, why did they have another
2 grounding, or why did they have a grounding and then a
3 second collision. Is it your contention that the CO
4 really wasn't very good, if so, why was he also at the
5 same time regarded as just super, "like my son." And
6 then secondly, why did two more guys in a row have the
7 same problem. Those are the, those were the questions,
8 where to ask them, I think Pearl Harbor SUBPAC, Pearl
9 Harbor -and ComSubLant in Norfolk, in his new role.
10 You can research this role; if you want me to, I can
11 dig around. I think there was an article in
12 Proceedings about the new structure. There have been
13 press releases. You can go in the front door at the
14 CNO and find out about it. But, it will define
15 Grossenbacher's role and mission with this new hat on.

16 MR. STRAUCH: Yes, we have heard about it.
17 And that is a good suggestion. We will follow up on
18 it.

19 MR. BYRON: Now, I think it is worth taken
20 into account. It is, what it does, it let's you talk
21 to Grossenbacher about this and I think that is just
22 super. I have got to tell you this guy has not only
23 done the right things with the Submarine Force,
24 admirably so. He has made it look easy. He has made

1 it graceful. His approach, which I allude to it here
2 in one or two of the articles, his approach to
3 submarines that can't do their job, is first of all
4 look at them hard. And where you do that is in the
5 TRE, in the training and readiness examination that is
6 done in the Atlantic down at, down in Andros' Island at
7 the AUTEC Range at the Tongue of the Ocean, if a guy
8 flunks that, which is to say he can't run his ship or
9 he can't get a hit with a torpedo. What this guy has
10 done, what Grossenbacher has done, is then to call the
11 squadron commander in New London or Norfolk, wherever
12 he is, and says, your boat, the USS, you know, the USS
13 Jalabob, has just flunked its TRE, get your ass to
14 Andros, helo to the submarine or take a small boat out
15 and ride that back and train them, train them and train
16 them until they can pass the TRE the next time. Man,
17 that has, that has just changed things around
18 completely. All of a sudden, all that front end of the
19 ship's stuff and basic submarining and navigation and
20 everything is being looked at very carefully.

21 So, the virtue to talking to Grossenbacher,
22 is you get to talk to a guy who is probably changing
23 the Submarine Force in a positive way.

24 And the last thing if you can find any way at

1 all to get in with Skip Bowen or his people and look at
2 NR's influence in this whole thing, it is probably
3 worth doing.

4 MR. STRAUCH: Those are good suggestions.
5 But, that raises a couple of other questions. And I
6 hope you have time, because --

7 MR. BYRON: I am at your service. I, you
8 know, this is a hobby plus to me and opinions are like
9 assholes, everyone has got one, but, this is something
10 that I have followed what is going on. I have a little
11 bit of inside Submarine Force assistance on this. And
12 if I didn't think it was good for the Submarine Force
13 and the Navy to really drill down on this, I wouldn't
14 play with you. But, I do think it is, so go ahead.

15 MR. STRAUCH: Okay. Thank you.

16 You allude to differences between SUBPAC and
17 SubLant in the way they do things. And can you expand
18 on that a little bit?

19 MR. BYRON: There has always been, in the past
20 there has always been distance. It was a singular
21 moment back 30 years ago or 25 when they went from two
22 to one Nuclear Weapons Manuals. There are all sorts of
23 not-invented-here issues that have been slowly dealt
24 with over the years, a single quality assurance manual,

1 etc., etc. But, the question of standardization and
2 documentation and procedures, there has always been a
3 difficulty. It is difficult between the two fleets and
4 it has been difficult between the Submarine Forces. I
5 am told that SUBPAC does not like losing autonomy to
6 SubLant in this new Navy structure. Not surprised by
7 it, it has got something to do probably with
8 personalities as well. A two star running your own
9 operation and all of a sudden you are getting help from
10 a three star somewhere else. -- whatever legitimate
11 issues you might be able to raise, it also not
12 something that you as a flag, as a leader, allegedly
13 master of your own fate, would really like to have
14 happen.

15 Efforts of standardization have been largely
16 successful, but, emphasis, priorities, etc., aren't.
17 There is a whole other dimension, you guys have looked
18 at it, but I think it is something you need to get back
19 to. And that is the nexus of submarine crew training
20 in the training centers and submarine crew training as
21 supervised by squadrons, and at the training
22 certification for readiness. I think there we are
23 starting to see a fairly wide divergence and emphasis
24 as well. In the Atlantic, the training centers, I

1 think, are being backed more than they were before
2 Grossenbacher got there. Now, in the Pacific, it is
3 not clear that they are.

4 Would you, guys, mind me talking on this?

5 MR. STRAUCH: Oh, please.

6 MR. BYRON: The Marine Corps, the Marine Corps
7 gets a lot of things right. One of the things they got
8 right is the definition of accountability.
9 Accountability is defined as authority plus
10 responsibility. If you look at the folks in charge of
11 Greeneville, one of the arguments that I've made in
12 various ways, probably not clear enough, but, I will
13 make it again, is that at the level above the skipper
14 of Greeneville, the accountability equation has broken
15 down. You have the -- Are you still there?

16 MR. STRAUCH: Yes.

17 MR. BYRON: Yes. You have the squadron that
18 had, clearly has authority. But, they have not assumed
19 responsibility for what went on on that ship. Now,
20 let's back up a little bit and look at the
21 certification of the ship's readiness, first of all, to
22 operate as a submarine, which is something that happens
23 when she comes out of the shipyard. And then her
24 certification to operate as a submarine on an ongoing

1 basis. That is the TRE inspection or the TRE
2 examination on, I think, an annual cycle and there are
3 several other inspections in the loop as well. And
4 then finally there is a certification for deployment.
5 It used to be called POM, Pre Overseas Movement. It
6 has a different acronym now. But, it means the same
7 thing. When Greeneville hit the Ehime Maru, she was
8 getting towards the end of our POM work up, getting
9 ready to deploy, which she subsequently did. The
10 Submarine Training Center at Ford Island is the place
11 that they go to do their team training, to be evaluated
12 by training center personnel. You saw the operation up
13 in New London, same game there. When the training
14 center evaluates a submarine crew and the diving
15 trainers and then the attack teachers, and some
16 classroom work also, they are working for the squadron.
17 The training centers don't have the authority to
18 certify on their own. They will make recommendations
19 to the squadron commander, who, in fact, will issue the
20 certification. Here is the problem. Squadron guys
21 come off to the training center and say, "Hey, you have
22 got the USS Jalabob coming in here next week for her
23 pre overseas movement certification, boy, are those
24 guys fucked up. They are terrible. They are... well,

1 you going to have a hard time." And then when it is
2 all done, and the training center says, well, we took
3 as far as we can, here is the problems we have got and
4 so on, the squadron goes ahead and certifies them.
5 What I don't think has been going on is a partnership
6 in exercise of what should be the squadron's
7 accountability, a general effective partnership between
8 the training center and the squadron to collectively
9 measure, assess and move forward the readiness of
10 individual crews like Greeneville. Greeneville's
11 action with the Ehime Maru was terrible. At every
12 single level, it violated a whole bunch of submarine
13 things. The are grounding in Saipan was terrible.
14 And the question is, "Jesus, if they are that bad, why
15 didn't somebody catch it?" The system is in place to
16 catch it. I don't think that the squadron properly
17 exercised their accountability, the responsibilities
18 that they should have. The article that got printed in
19 this month's issue of Proceedings, was a result of the
20 discussion I had with myself. The first thing you say
21 is, well, if the sons of bitches aren't doing their
22 job, get rid of them. They had no value. They don't
23 carry any weapons. They don't kill anybody. They are
24 not part of the military mission of the Navy. They are

1 just there, the squadron, and because the material
2 readiness function is now so well taken by the various
3 material establishment and processes and systems and
4 maintenance teams and so on, the justification for all
5 the other record keeping squadrons do for submarines is
6 easily done in the Excel Database. The rationale to
7 keep the squadron is gone. If they can't do their job,
8 why have them?

9 And then the argument in my mind went on to
10 say, if they can't do their jobs, you probably have to
11 reinvent them, because you need someone to work at the
12 retail level, with crews and skippers of individual
13 submarines, to make sure that what is going on down
14 there, the chemistry in the boat, the skills of the
15 submarine team, are such that they are really ready to
16 do this. Squadron commanders are the best captains the
17 Submarine Force can produce. They probably have decent
18 staffs. And they ought to be able to do this, they
19 ought to be encouraged to this. If all this other crap
20 is getting in the way, then get the other crap out of
21 the way and tell them that this their job. If that is
22 what comes out of Greenville, it will be a good thing.

23 I mean, that was a lot rambling and so on,
24 but if you take the training centers' readiness

1 evaluations of submarine crews and the squadron's
2 certification of that readiness, and look hard in how
3 that process is actually going, and how well it deals
4 with my five questions, then I think you would be on to
5 something.

6 MR. STRAUCH: Okay. So, it sounds like what
7 you are saying is if the squadron has done its
8 oversight job and they haven't worked together with the
9 training command to make sure that the guys that the
10 training people say are certified, really are qualified
11 to do the job they are suppose to do.

12 MR. BYRON: But, really, you know, a guy named
13 Charlie White, he is retired now, used to be in Oahu,
14 he was the SUBPAC ops guy about 25 years ago, he came
15 in and talked to us guys when, when we were, when I was
16 going through PCO school out there. And it was great,
17 I still remember his comment. Charlie come in and says,
18 "Look, running a submarine is really easy if you don't
19 plumber it up. So don't plumber it up." That is the
20 best advice I have ever heard on command. Running a
21 submarine is fairly easy, but, boy, if you don't do it
22 right, if you plumber it up, you can get killed or
23 somebody else gets killed. The assessment of whether
24 or not the people have the skills and the attitudes and

1 it is usually the skill issue, individually and as a
2 team, gets looked at in the submarines, I am sorry, in
3 the submarine training centers, and in the submarines
4 themselves, and I have got to tell you, it is seldom,
5 if ever, that a submarine goes to sea in home waters
6 and doesn't have somebody from the staff riding them.
7 What the staff -is there for is to run an inspection on
8 some system or electronic gadget, but anybody from the
9 staff who rides a submarine should be assessing the
10 overall skills and ability of that ship to do its job.
11 It is a fairly simple task.

12 I don't know how many boats I have ridden.
13 If you get out there and the first day you get scared,
14 something is wrong, okay. If there is something going
15 on that worries you, that makes you concerned, then
16 that is something that ought to come back to the
17 squadron and somebody ought to sort of drill down and
18 figure out what it is and so on.

19 Fixing these training issues, these readiness
20 issues, is fairly easy. Every now and again you have
21 got to fire someone. But, in general, it is just a
22 case of patiently walking people through until they get
23 the motor skills and the knowledge to build up so as
24 they can do the job. That is all.

1 The job of officers is to set standards. I
2 don't think in the case of Greeneville, prior to the
3 Ehime Maru collision, that this notion was properly
4 attended to by the commander of Submarine Squadron 1
5 and his people. I don't think they set high enough
6 standards for Greeneville in the basic submarining
7 issues.

8 Now, the next sin that this squadron
9 commander committed after she hits the Ehime Maru,
10 after she goes through all, all of the great anguish,
11 new skipper aboard, etc., all the opportunity in the
12 world to get things right in that ship, all the
13 motivation to do it: he certifies her as ready for
14 deployment and she goes off and deploys and on the 27th
15 of August she hits a coral reef going into Saipan, with
16 probably the most egregious collection of navigation
17 errors in modern memory. Everything that happened
18 had been seen earlier in the POM certification process
19 by the squadron. They knew that their chart records
20 were screwed up. They knew that their entire chart and
21 navigation publications records were inaccurate, out of
22 date and dangerous. They didn't see good plotting
23 skills. They didn't see a good navigation team
24 working. They had a brand new skipper, they sent them

1 off to Saipan and son of bitch, they end up firing four
2 guys. Which, by the way, there is a cost in this that
3 nobody seems to be accounting for: the loss of trained
4 submarine personnel. I suspect it costs as much to
5 make that the submarine skipper as it does the
6 commander of an air squadron or an airline pilot and we
7 are losing sight of that resources loss as well.

8 MR. STRAUCH: What evidence, what evidence
9 does the squadron have that all this stuff was bad
10 before they went to Saipan?

11 MR. BYRON: They did a nav inspection. Have
12 you guys read the investigation?

13 MR. STRAUCH: Yes, we have.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I have, yes.

15 MR. BYRON: Okay. It says in there that, you
16 know, I would have to dig it out, but it says in there
17 that one of the findings of fact is that squadron did
18 an investigation, I am sorry, did, did an inspection in
19 navigation as part of the POM work up, and they found
20 their chart holdings were inaccurate and that the
21 plotting skills were poor. Basically it said they
22 sort of flunked it, but not hard. In the, I am trying
23 to think, the endorsement, no, I guess it was either an
24 opinion or finding of fact in the basic investigation,

1 they also said that the new skipper and the executive
2 officer - who is the ship's training officer always -
3 and the navigator did not verify the correction of any
4 of the discrepancies from this inspection, but rather
5 relied on the assistant navigator, who is an enlisted
6 kid, to verify, to state that they had been fixed.

7 Now, what wasn't said in there, but probably
8 should have been is, son of bitch, nobody from the
9 squadron verified it either. They let these guys go
10 west based on, on, I don't know, the promise that
11 things would get fixed, or a statement from the
12 assistant navigator to the navigator to the executive
13 officer to the captain to the squadron that things were
14 fixed. They weren't fixed. The simple fact is that
15 after the grounding in Saipan, it was determined that
16 none of the things that were supposed to get fixed were
17 fixed. And most of the problems had to have been
18 evident to the squadron during the POM inspection
19 because they were not things that could have crept in
20 later.

21 MR. STRAUCH: Okay. Well, now you earlier
22 said things about Admiral Konetzni and one of the
23 things we wanted to ask you is -- on the Greeneville,
24 the collision.

1 MR. BYRON: If I were you, guys, I would ask,
2 how can you both be responsible and not responsible.
3 Why wasn't the skipper better trained or conversely,
4 why did you mistakenly think he was well trained? And
5 then the second thing I would ask him, is what do you
6 think should have been done besides firing the skipper,
7 to ensure that neither Greeneville would have another
8 accident nor that other submarines would find
9 themselves in the same predicament?

10 MR. STRAUCH: What kind of reputation does he
11 have other than leading a charmed life?

12 MR. BYRON: It is a couple of reputations. He
13 is an interesting guy and I think a pretty good guy.
14 He is, you know, he smokes cigars or chomps on them,
15 and he is an extraordinarily talented blowhard and that
16 is not meant in a pejorative way. He really is almost
17 larger than life. The Submarine Force produces
18 characters like this off and on. But, it is, I think,
19 surely in the business of Greeneville's collision with
20 the Ehime Maru, he was not a standup guy. And my view
21 of this is, his reputation is that would not be a total
22 surprise to a whole bunch of people.

23 MR. STRAUCH: Okay. If you could, we may have
24 a chance to talk to Scott Waddle, the CO of the

1 collision. And I am wondering what kinds of things
2 would you ask him, if you had a chance to talk him
3 about the accident?

4 MR. BYRON: I guess, you know, you have to. By
5 the way, he was a standup guy. I don't know him, but
6 he has got a decent reputation. I admire the way he
7 conducted himself.

8 I think I would say, "Scott, in retrospect,
9 what is your judgment of the crew's skills in basic
10 areas of navigation and submerged operations, periscope
11 skills and so on. What is your assessment of your
12 crew's skills in this area at the time of the
13 collision? And if you think that things were not as
14 good as you thought they were, why didn't you see
15 that?" I mean, it is all right to say, yeah, I
16 screwed up, it is my fault. But you've got to dig a
17 bit deeper. How come you didn't know things were bad
18 as that? And how come your executive officer and your
19 officer of the deck didn't jump in your shit when
20 things were not going well, the two minutes before you
21 hit the Ehime Maru and you took a look and you went
22 deep and you went back up? I would also ask him who in
23 the hell was checking their watch quarter and station
24 bill to make sure that there were qualified

1 watchstanders on station? I would also ask him, who in
2 God's good earth said that the sonar supervisor could,
3 on watch, go conduct a tour? Those are good questions.

4 MR. STRAUCH: Well, you know, that raises a
5 point that I, that I still can't figure out. Because
6 the Court of Inquiry looked into the issue of the watch
7 bills.

8 MR. BYRON: Yes.

9 MR. STRAUCH: And one of the things that
10 emerges from this, is that, is that the CO kind of
11 followed rules depending on whether he wanted to or
12 not. You know, he had standing orders that he
13 disregarded, without explaining why he was disregarding
14 them. And the watch bill also. And I guess, I just
15 can't understand how a submarine can have procedures
16 that it is really up to the CO whether or not he wants
17 to follow them, including procedures that he, himself,
18 requires that they be followed.

19 MR. BYRON: Well, you are asking a very good
20 question. It is a question not to Scott, but rather to
21 the squadron, to the TYCOM, SUBPAC and to
22 Grossenbacher. And maybe to Skip Bowmen as well.
23 That is a very good question. The fact is I never
24 thought there were such rules. The way, when I was

1 driving a boat, the way I told my people is, it is
2 their job to say yes and my job to say no. I was the
3 only guy that could decide to break the rules. And if
4 I did that, I did it very consciously. I usually
5 documented it in some way or made sure my exec knew
6 what I was doing if there was time. And basically we,
7 we followed the rules, in which there is a lot of
8 protection and a lot of experience.

9 The other question you may ask Scott and ask
10 the guys up the line, but he will probably most likely
11 to give you an honest answer, is do you think that you
12 lived under two sets of standards, one for the front
13 end of the ship and one for the back end? And if you
14 guys haven't dug into this, you really should. That is
15 why I keep bringing up Naval Reactors. The simple fact
16 is that if had he put non qualified people on the watch
17 back aft, or had he ignored procedures back aft as he
18 did up forward, had any of the things that you can put
19 in a bad category, if these had been done in his
20 operation of engineering plan, he knows that, had this
21 been found out, he probably would be fired. There are
22 two sets of standards operating a submarine. And I
23 admire the standards that Naval Reactors imposes on
24 nuclear engineering in submarines. They do it right.

1 The people are trained. The people are evaluated, they
2 are inspected. It is documented. They do the
3 procedures as told, if there is a problem with
4 procedures, they fix it, etc., etc.

5 Up forward, that has been the case in the
6 Polaris, Poseidon, Trident Weapon System and, on a good
7 submarine, it has been the case everywhere else, too.
8 But that is something that is becoming increasingly
9 optional with the skipper and it is not something that
10 all squadron commanders or type commanders really
11 insist on. So, now we are getting down to the real
12 question: are there two sets of standards in
13 submarines, one having to do with submarine operations
14 and the other having to do with engineering operations
15 involving the nuclear reactor?

16 Now, my contention has been for a couple of
17 decades in print that the answer isn't to water down
18 the engineering standards, but rather to consistently
19 and correctly impose them on the rest of the ship.
20 This is not a blanket condemnation of submarine
21 skippers, submarine squadrons, type commanders or the
22 Submarine Force. The good guys do it right everywhere.
23 The system, however, is less likely to catch, less
24 likely to correct a failure to do it correctly in

1 submarine operations than it is in reactor operations.
2 As simple as that.

3 MR. STRAUCH: Now, that raises another issue
4 that I read and that is that there is also two
5 cultures, engineering versus operations. And
6 apparently Scott Waddle came from an engineering
7 background, but I read somewhere that he lacked a good
8 operational background. Apparently his first two tours
9 were PCO tours and his third was an XO on a SSBN rather
10 than an SSN, and therefore, he never really had the
11 hands experience in running an SSN until he really got
12 on one as the CO. Does that make sense to you?

13 MR. BYRON: Yes. The good guys can do
14 everything. There are some incredibly talented guys.
15 I bet you, I will bet you Al Konetzni is as good a
16 submariner as you have ever seen. He ain't going to
17 screw up the reactor and he ain't going screw up going
18 to periscope depth. And you will find that the people
19 who have succeeded in the Submarine Force and are
20 admired in the Submarine Force do it all well. The
21 question, though, is whether one can survive not as a
22 future chief in the Naval Operations, not as a Tom
23 Fargo or, -Carl Trost or Frank Kelso, or what have you.
24 But, rather just be regarded as a typical fine

1 officer, senior rank. The ability to boil water, the
2 ability to handle engineering well and properly is -the
3 sine qua non. It has to be there, it can't survive
4 without it. The other is for most guys, most times,
5 optional. And because of this and the steady pressure
6 over time, higher -standards, more stringent
7 requirements, etc., and the ability to skate on the
8 basic submarine operations side, the whole culture has
9 been perverted so that the people who are raised as
10 infants, have become captains and commodores and flags,
11 knowing that they can't do anything in engineering or
12 it is deadly, but not being as tough on things up
13 front.

14 MR. STRAUCH: How did this come about?

15 MR. BYRON: Because Rickover was smarter than
16 anybody else. And that is the answer. And because
17 you can't fault the standards. You can't fault what
18 they have done What you can fault is their
19 unwillingness to hammer that forward as well. Some
20 guys do it. I think Grossenbacher is doing it, that is
21 why I am so high on him. But you know, it shows up in
22 a grading basis. If you can look at inspection results
23 for ORSE, Operational Reactor Safeguard Exams, and
24 compare them to TRE. Ships that excel in their TREs

1 and don't do well in their ORSE have skippers with a
2 bad future. If they do well in ORS, and don't excel in
3 TRE, they are okay. That simple.

4 The officers who dedicate themselves to the
5 challenging jobs in the engineering world, being an
6 engineer officer, building or overhauling submarines,
7 doing a tour in the ORSE Board, doing a tour as a
8 squadron engineer or in a TYCOM N-4 shop, these guys,
9 as long as they are good at that, will have a very
10 promising future in the Submarine Force and in the
11 Navy.

12 On the other hand, equally skilled officers
13 who don't do that, but rather excel in other areas,
14 torpedo shooting, weapons, operations, trident
15 business, POM, etc., etc., they have a much harder
16 struggle even to get promoted, to get assigned to the
17 scarce number of XO and CO slots, etc. Whenever it
18 comes down to a tiebreaker between a good nuke and a
19 good submariner who hasn't had the opportunity to
20 demonstrate how good a nuke he is, it always, 100
21 percent of the time, goes to the good nuke.

22 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Okay. I would like to
23 interrupt for a moment. This is Tom Roth-Roffy, I need
24 to stop the tape and --

1 MR. BYRON: That is fine with me. Is this
2 helpful to you- guys?

3 MR. STRAUCH: Yes, indeed.

4 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Yes, very much.

5 MR. WOODY: This is very helpful. You know,
6 unfortunately, we don't, we don't have current
7 submarine experience.

8 (End tape 1, side A.)

9 MR. STRAUCH: You are leading us to really
10 what we needed to look at.

11 MR. BYRON: Well, you, guys, are dealing with
12 omerta.

13 MR. STRAUCH: I am sorry, dealing with?

14 MR. BYRON: Omerta. It is a Sicilian word.

15 MR. STRAUCH: From the Godfather, the Code of
16 Silence.

17 MR. BYRON: It ain't funny. Sicilian omerta
18 looks like a God damn gossip circle compared to how the
19 Submarine Force does business.

20 MR. STRAUCH: Okay. We have got the tape
21 recording running again now and we are ready to
22 continue.

23 MR. BYRON: I would offer you, guys, we will
24 do whatever you want to here, but I want to offer you

1 that this is, what you are getting from me is, is
2 really of the nature of deep background, to help you
3 think about how to think about this, and sort of steer
4 you in the right direction. It is of, you know this,
5 but I am going to say it flat out, it is zero value to
6 you to say to anybody you are talking to, that Byron
7 said this, or Byron said that. This is the realm of
8 ideas and not authority. There may be a couple of, I
9 have to think about this, there may be a couple of
10 other people that you need to talk to, perhaps even off
11 the record, to get a steer on this, but, this, this is
12 really intended to help you think about how to think
13 about the investigation and there is absolutely nothing
14 here that is of a factual nature. You are going to
15 have to get that yourself, from these guys.

16 Now, what worries me is that this isn't the
17 first shot that NTSB has had at the Submarine Force.
18 If you, guys, don't do this well, and do it on a
19 compelling way and do it, you know, you get Tom Ricks
20 to look at it and do a couple of articles on it, etc.,
21 then it is probably going to get shoved aside by the
22 Submarine Force, because - as Ned Beatty says in the
23 movie Network talking to Peter Finch in his big
24 boardroom - "you are tampering with the basic forces of

1 nature here."

2 MR. STRAUCH: That is why we are talking to
3 you. Hopefully we will, hopefully, we will do a better
4 job this time.

5 MR. BYRON: Okay. I am trying to think how you can
6 get access to this two culture thing. That's a good
7 question to Grossenbacher.

8 MR. STRAUCH: Okay. Well, we have another, we
9 have a couple more questions.

10 And this is kind of reading between the
11 lines, Scott Waddle, why was he so eager to do DV
12 cruises -we talked to officers on his sub, and they
13 said that he enjoyed them. Why do you think he really
14 wanted to do them as much as he did?

15 MR. BYRON: -- I am not surprised. A poet
16 once described it as a small boy's notion of doing
17 good. I think you have that. I think good
18 submariners, like doing things that they think are
19 neat, that are good, proper to do. It is a great ego
20 trip to show off that that wonderful toy. And he was
21 strongly encouraged to do this by Al Konetzni. I
22 can't think of his connection to Konetzni, didn't he
23 work for him in the Pentagon?

24 MR. STRAUCH: I am not sure. At some point, I

1 believe he was, was Konetzni the Commandant of the
2 Academy at the same time Waddle was there?

3 MR. BYRON: Yes. Al was deputy dog up at the
4 Boat School and I think, Waddle was one of the military
5 officers in the military department for him.

6 MR. STRAUCH: Right.

7 MR. BYRON: Here is Al. He may be an acquired
8 taste, but many people do acquire the taste for Al.
9 And obviously, Scott Waddle did, he put his trust in
10 him. He admired the guy. He may have been sucking up
11 a little bit. Al really, really liked to show off
12 Submarine Force. He was in a little bit of squeeze
13 because Admiral Mackie had his ass hanging out with
14 these, with these folks that were in town to play golf
15 and ride a submarine, and you know, flags talk to
16 flags, and it looked like it was something that they
17 could do. The interesting fact that really jingles
18 back to training levels and training assessment: the
19 squadron assessed Greeneville's training level so high
20 that they were willing and did give up the most
21 precious thing there is in submarine training, which is
22 a training week at sea. They said submarine, you are
23 doing so well that you don't have to go sea this week.
24 Then this thing came along and they mustered almost an

1 all-star crew and off they went for a day to entertain
2 people with angles and dangles and so on.

3 I think he did it - I think he was keenly
4 interested in doing it - because it stroked his ego,
5 showed off his submarine force and pleased his boss.
6 Okay.

7 MR. STRAUCH: Those are good reasons.

8 What role, do you think, Admiral Mackie
9 played in this and how would that have affected the way
10 Scott Waddle did things?

11 MR. BYRON: I think that if you want to look
12 at something that is jinxed, it is Admiral Mackie. I
13 think his role was, was negligible once this thing got
14 set in motion. I would not even contend that he
15 influenced things. This was a simple flag to flag
16 request. Konetzni would not like to have people
17 expecting to ride a submarine who couldn't. He had his
18 own guy, Scott Waddle, down there who would probably do
19 it. Anything Al asked, he would do, and Greeneville
20 was the target of opportunity to get to sea for a day.

21 Once Mackie ended up with this, with this problem of
22 folks there wanting to ride a submarine, and he made
23 one phone call. After that I think he was out of it.

24 MR. STRAUCH: Okay. In your article you

1 talked about social promotions. And you said that more
2 boats should flunk inspections. How often do you think
3 that boats actually flunk inspections?

4 MR. BYRON: I think USS Greeneville defacto
5 flunked a readiness inspection prior to the events of
6 February, defacto flunked a navigation inspection prior
7 to running aground on the 27 of August. And then went
8 on and just added one more for icing on the cake.
9 There is a prima facie case that they couldn't do what
10 they were alleged to be able to do. That is a social
11 promotion. And I think it happens a bit more often
12 than it should, in the Pacific, in things that don't
13 have to do with engineering. I think that in the
14 Atlantic it has come to a screeching halt.

15 Let me tell you of one other guy to
16 interview, although you will never get an honest answer
17 and that is Submarine Group 7 --

18 (Pause.)

19 MR. BYRON: The inside story on Greeneville
20 after the grounding, I am told, is that Group 7, who is
21 the SUBOPAETH, the submarine operating authority from
22 whom they work when they are deployed, said, get these
23 fuckers out of here. And that there is some surprise
24 registered that she was in the Arabian Sea, when she

1 had that collision with Ogden, because it looked like
2 she was just going to get sent home. Every now and
3 again, a boat ends up on a deployment that just can't
4 do its job well. And apparently that was the case with
5 Greeneville. You may want to ask Submarine Group 7 as
6 well as SUBPAC, what is the assessment of Greeneville's
7 performance on this patrol and if it was not stellar,
8 what does that tell you or what should that tell you
9 about your training and certification system?

10 MR. STRAUCH: Now, what is the relationship of
11 Submarine Group 7 with the Greeneville?

12 MR. BYRON: Until she deployed on her current
13 deployment, none. When she deploys, she chops from
14 the operating authority probably of SUBPAC, who I think
15 is the submarine op auth for all the ships in the Pearl
16 Harbor area, Hawaii waters, to the operating authority
17 of Group 7, in Yokosuka.

18 MR. STRAUCH: Okay.

19 MR. BYRON: Sub op authority is that authority
20 that allows the sub op auth to direct a submarine
21 captain to move his submarine, get underway, go places,
22 etc., etc. It is the authority to operate the
23 submarine and to direct it. And the sub op auth, when
24 she chops, I think when she chops to, she will have an

1 operational boss, a command boss, you know, battlegroup
2 or what have you, but, she also works hats to the sub
3 op auth, who has the authority to direct her as a
4 submarine.

5 MR. STRAUCH: Okay. Do you think Scott Waddle
6 was a social promotion?

7 MR. BYRON: I didn't use that phrase about
8 individuals. I did about crews, correct?

9 MR. STRAUCH: Yes.

10 MR. BYRON: Okay. No, I think he was a fine
11 officer, due course, etc. I think that he has all the
12 tickets and if you were to take his fitness reports
13 with those of contemporaries of his who were up to be
14 selected for commander or to be screened for submarine
15 executive officer, or for submarine commanding officer,
16 if you were put them all in a centrifuge, turn it on,
17 then he would turn out to be one of the winners. He
18 would turn out to be one of the people in a linear peer
19 ranking that would be above the cut point in just about
20 anyone's assessment, based on his fitness reports. The
21 question isn't whether or not the evaluations are
22 skewed, but rather whether or not the standards are
23 skewed. And he met the standards that he was suppose
24 to meet, which is he boils water well.

1 MR. STRAUCH: Okay. I see what you are saying.

2 Let me see, I have one other -- the process
3 for sub commanders, what you are saying is, as I
4 understand it, the process is okay, given the standards
5 that they are using, but that the standards,
6 themselves, are insufficient or inaccurate. Is that a
7 correct, a fair assessment?

8 MR. BYRON: More than insufficient and
9 inaccurate, I would argue that they are perverse. They
10 do a perfect job on assessing one's ability to handle a
11 live Naval reactor. No one has ever knowingly been
12 assigned to command of a submarine or screen for
13 command of a submarine who anyone on the board thought
14 was unsafe operating a reactor. There have been a lot
15 of folks , a lot of screening boards grit their teeth
16 as far as ability to handle a front end of the ship. I
17 sat through two major command boards and two CO/XO
18 boards for submariners when I was a detailer, 20 years
19 ago. I would guess the same is still true, that the
20 lament of the board members, and I sat in tank sessions
21 when they were voted, and I listened to them talk and
22 everything else, and these are, these are the best
23 people in the Submarine Force, running this board, flag
24 officer, four other individuals, doing the screening

1 for XO, the screening for CO, the screening for major,
2 captain and command, where they collect, select the
3 squadron commanders and so on. The single word, the
4 greatest lament was, had to do with selectivity. They
5 just didn't have the ability to find, to pick only the
6 people that had all the talents they wanted. They had
7 to dip a little bit deeper into the gray zone and pick
8 people who didn't have everything they were looking
9 for, and invariably the ones they picked were okay in
10 engineering, but not okay perhaps or at least, you
11 know, questionable on their operating skills. Now, I
12 bet you that if Scott Waddle had the same submarine
13 career experience I did, that he would end up on the
14 ninth of February with these guys riding out there,
15 looking at a submarine, going to periscope depth
16 perfectly, shooting their torpedoes perfectly,
17 operating it, running a watch station bill, perfectly,
18 having good watch, trained watch team -- not because I
19 am better than he is, it is rather because I was raised
20 in an environment where those were the only standards
21 that mattered. I was a diesel guy and I didn't have
22 to give a shit about the naval reactor because I didn't
23 have one. I worried an awful lot of about diesel
24 engines, but I got to know more about them than I ever

1 wanted to. But if the engine blows up, it doesn't give
2 San Diego a deeper harbor.

3 So, I mean, this is not to fault Scott
4 Waddle. It is say that the system has emphasized
5 engineering skills against having a basic submarine
6 operating skills and has permitted people to run
7 submarines who don't have both.

8 MR. STRAUCH: All right, John, I don't have
9 any more questions. So, let me see if Tom or Bill have
10 any questions.

11 Bill, do you have any?

12 MR. WOODY: Yes, just one thing occurs to me.
13 This idea of whether the crew of the Greenville was
14 well trained or not. I have always wondered, I assumed
15 to myself, if you take the assumption that the crew was
16 well trained, could they have been just taking a
17 holiday mode to have a lower standard the day of the
18 cruise because they had visitors onboard? Is that a
19 likely scenario?

20 MR. BYRON: I think there are three things
21 played. I wouldn't have put it quite that way, but you
22 are onto something. First of all, take a look at the
23 watch station bill for that day and compare it to
24 people who are actually on watch and compare it to a

1 watch station bill for preceding time. I think you will
2 find that that was pretty much an all-star team, a
3 pick-up squad. They didn't take the full team to sea,
4 because they didn't expect to be doing anything other
5 than just simply getting the boat wet and surfacing
6 again. They weren't shooting torpedoes, they weren't
7 doing any intensive operational stuff. They didn't
8 have to trail a Victor Class, etc., etc. This was
9 going to be an easy submarine operating day at sea,
10 doing the most basic of submarine things, which is
11 going up and down. And, you know, showing things off,
12 shooting water slugs, etc. How much skill does it
13 take to do an emergency surface? You have to be able
14 to grab two large toggle switches and move them from
15 one position to another. That's it.

16 So, I think that the people that they had at
17 sea were not the kind of first string or three first
18 strings, three watch sections, whatever they have
19 operating normally at sea. On some watch stations, hey
20 kind of took it easy on the stringency with which they
21 set their qualification requirements.

22 Secondly, it is a fun day. You are showing
23 off. You have got strangers out there. You have got
24 girls out there. You have got the SubPac chief of

1 Staff, Bobby Brandhuber, who is a wonderful great guy,
2 I think the world of him. His career is one of the
3 tragedies out of this. It is always fun to talk to
4 the Chief of Staff in SUBPAC. I mean, this was a fun
5 day and you are relaxed when you are having fun. And
6 third, there was some confusion and I think people got
7 sloppy. That business with the time bearing plot, the
8 vertical plot that the fire control petty officer ...

9 MR. STRAUCH: Right.

10 MR. BYRON: fire control operator was
11 keeping, the issue isn't that he did the wrong things
12 with the plot, but rather that the officer of the deck
13 didn't pay any God damn attention to him. That just is
14 sloppy. The way that the sonar people handled the
15 contact situation and ranges was, and contact ranges
16 was bad. It is all in the investigation and the Board
17 of Inquiry - anyone can look at it. I would simply say
18 that things that looked like they were serious errors,
19 were, in fact, serious errors. The crew itself was
20 having fun. It wasn't well organized. It wasn't the
21 first string. I don't think that anyone says I want to
22 get killed in a submarine or hit somebody and kill
23 others. It is just that they got a bit sloppy and
24 relaxed because it seemed to be an easy fun day at sea.

1 MR. WOODY: Okay. Thank you, I appreciate
2 that.

3 One of the things that came as somewhat of a
4 surprise to me, was the amount of testimony devoted to
5 the speeds the exceeded classification and the depth
6 that was used. Is, I would, I would wonder if this
7 was something that was routinely done on distinguished
8 visitors days anyway. Would you have any comment on
9 that?

10 MR. BYRON: I don't know. I haven't been with
11 riders on a nuclear submarine in a long, long time
12 where folks were showing off rather than doing the
13 mission.

14 MR. WOODY: Okay.

15 MR. BYRON: That should not be a factor, you
16 know.

17 MR. WOODY: One other thing that was kind of
18 curious, which is kind of related, what you have been
19 talking about in the training facilities. Captain
20 Kyle, a fine person, mentioned that when he learned
21 that the Greeneville didn't have qualified watch
22 standers assigned by the watch bill - I believe they
23 had one who was unqualified - that he asked his rider,
24 ship riders, if they encountered this on other ships.

1 And the answer was, yes, we occasionally do find that.
2 My question is, if they did occasionally find that,
3 why didn't that raise a flag somewhere?

4 MR. BYRON: I agree, I don't know Tom Kyle,
5 but, I followed his testimony very closely and I share
6 your admiration. There is an honest man. And that
7 was one of the things that got me writing, exactly what
8 you hit on.

9 MR. WOODY: I see.

10 MR. BYRON: It goes to the question of
11 squadron riders and squadron commanders and their
12 standards. I found that inconceivable. I know how
13 tough it was to qualify watch standers when I was
14 riding the SS 244 as a sonarman. I know how much we
15 worried about it, how we worried about stack rotations
16 and contact saturation and all of this other stuff, to
17 make sure we always had a well qualified watch stander
18 on the stack and a well qualified watch section on
19 watch. What Tom did is he went back to his old
20 squadron, which I think was one of the San Diego
21 squadron (he was a Squad Dog, before he went out to be
22 training officer) and he said, hey, this struck me as
23 weird, have you guys ever seen this? They said, oh,
24 yeah. If you're riding a submarine and find out that

1 the watchstanders aren't qualified, it is time to say,
2 "Captain, I want to send a flash message to the
3 squadron commander that says you are fucked up."
4 Because this is really egregious. So, you have hit on
5 the right thing. I commend you.

6 MR. WOODY: And you mentioned a little while
7 ago about the squadron staff having, you know,
8 unqualified people. Do they have enough people to do
9 their job?

10 MR. BYRON: They have probably got too many
11 jobs.

12 MR. WOODY: Too many jobs.

13 MR. BYRON: And, I have got to tell you that
14 the emphasis squadrons have has evolved over time.
15 Squadrons used to have a great squadron commander, a
16 really seasoned chief staff officer, post command, and
17 then they had various functionaries, an engineer guy
18 and an electronics guy, and you know, etc., etc. In
19 the late '60s, the Submarine Force decided that they
20 really needed to do a better job of inspecting people's
21 abilities to run reactors. They invented the ORSE
22 teams and move that function to the fleet. Previously
23 it was NPEB, the Navy Propulsion Examining Board, which
24 worked for Rickover. Rickover created the ORSE teams

1 in fleet and gave them the NPEB function. At the same
2 time, they established two new jobs in squadrons,
3 called Squadron Deputies. One was for training and one
4 was for readiness. I forget how they distinguished
5 them. But, the requirements were that they be a post
6 command nuclear trained officer, with scores in the
7 upper half. And they pretty well held to that and put
8 super nukes or the best nukes they can find in the
9 squadron deputy jobs. That has continued to the
10 present day. What they did with the chief staff
11 officer was to say, this guy is fundamentally an admin
12 guy. We are running out of folks to assign to that, so
13 we will just simply say he needs to be a commander and
14 we don't care if he has even had command. And so the
15 chief staff officer is an admin guy. The two squadron
16 deputies are the heavies as far as boiling water is
17 concerned. One of them is suppose to be the heaviest
18 as far as torpedo shooting, etc. There is a whole bunch
19 of other folks doing a whole bunch of other and often
20 times unnecessary functions in my view.
21 I don't see anything wrong with that, if they played it
22 exactly the way they wrote it. The squadron commander
23 in charge of the readiness of all ships assigned to
24 him, that is from stem post to stern. One deputy in

1 charge of the reactor readiness, engineering readiness.

2 And the other deputy in charge fundamentally of basic
3 submarine operating skills and weapon skills, a pretty
4 good system. And then to say that furthermore, we are
5 going to set standards. We are going to pay attention
6 to our inspections. We aren't going to let people
7 practice sloppy submarining, even if they getting -good
8 grades on their ORSE - now that is a good system. I
9 don't think that is what is there now.

10 MR. WOODY: I think that covers what I can
11 think of at this time. I am sure I will think of a lot
12 of things later.

13 MR. BYRON: Well, I am at your service. You
14 can call me anytime.

15 MR. WOODY: Thank you very much. I appreciate
16 the offer.

17 MR. BYRON: Yes.

18 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Okay, John, this is Tom
19 Roth-Roffy, and I have just got a couple of questions
20 as well.

21 MR. BYRON: Okay.

22 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Could you discuss the
23 relationship and the duties of the type commander and
24 the squadron commander? What are they responsible for?

1 MR. BYRON: Type commander is responsible for
2 the material condition and the readiness of all units
3 assigned, which in the Pacific are the submarines, the
4 -submarine tender at Guam, and also responsible for the
5 shore establishment elements that belong to the fleet,
6 the Trident Repair Facility in Bangor, the Repair
7 Facility in San Diego. I forget what they call
8 counterpart in Pearl Harbor, etc. He has command
9 authority over Submarine Groups in, in the Pacific,
10 that is Group Nine in Bangor and Groups One and Five.
11 And he has command also of those submarine squadrons
12 that are not subordinated to a submarine group. So,
13 that is his role.

14 The submarine squadron and submarine groups
15 have some equivalent responsibility, although, I think
16 this has changed since I was there. Group 5 functioned
17 as a squadron. It had half the submarines in San Diego
18 and Submarine Squadron 3 had the other half. Submarine
19 Group 1 continues to own submarines like it were a
20 squadron. But, Group 9 doesn't own submarines
21 directly, they belong to 17 and to whatever the fast
22 attack squadron is now in Bangor.

23 Submarine squadrons have responsibility for
24 the training and readiness of those submarine units

1 that are assigned to them. They are the life support
2 system for the submarine commander. Scott Waddle
3 worked for Submarine Group 1. Submarine Group 1 wrote
4 his fitness report. Submarine Group 1's fitness report
5 was written by SUBPACSUBPAC. Now, there is a whole
6 bunch of dotted lines here. When the Skipper of
7 Greeneville takes this submarine to the Western Pacific
8 and deploys in Submarine Group 7, he gets a concurrent
9 fitness report written by Submarine Group 7 as well.
10 Does that help?

11 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Yes, sir, it does.

12 And could you also, I understand the squadron
13 chain of command. It is basically between the boat and
14 the SUBPAC. Where does the type commander fit? What
15 is his superior in the chain of command?

16 MR. BYRON: He works for the Fleet. Work for
17 Tom, Tom Fargo.

18 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Okay. And does he have
19 subordinates other than the groups?

20 MR. BYRON: He has the squadrons that are not
21 assigned to groups.

22 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Okay.

23 MR. BYRON: He has the other peripheral
24 submarine activities like TRF, repair sites. He has a

1 dotted line ownership of the training centers. He
2 shares training centers with CNET.

3 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Okay. And, in the Court of
4 Inquiry, the Commander of Squadron 1 mentioned some of
5 his relationships with the commanding officers of the
6 submarines in his squadron and he kind of described it
7 as a mentoring process, you know, is that is an
8 effective oversight way to do oversight of the
9 submarines in the squadron?

10 MR. BYRON: I don't know the guy -- I think he
11 is still there. I have read his bio. And for various
12 reasons I like the guy. He has done some good things.
13 He is a creature of National War College which is a
14 place I put a lot of my life in times past. And he
15 looks to be a fine officer. I saw nothing in his
16 testimony that said otherwise. And I think that he
17 just expressed the, the life view of the best squadron
18 commanders that I have worked with. It is a mentoring
19 relationship. He tries to help the submarine captains
20 to succeed and so on. I think he gets to play good cop
21 while his deputies play bad cop. The deputies take a
22 similar approach. They will try and improve how folks
23 do things try and help the skippers. When I was in
24 command, I was with Group 5 I regarded the Group 5

1 commander and Chief Staff and the Deputies as probably
2 my best friends in command. They helped me more, did
3 more for me than anybody else I worked for. So, the
4 squad dog in Squadron 1 has said it pretty well. But
5 -the squadron commander also has working for him the
6 commander of the Submarine Training Center Pacific when
7 it comes to assessing crews and doing the
8 certifications and so on. And he ought to be imposing
9 standards there. This guy is doing what he wants. His
10 deputies are doing what he wants. And he should see
11 that they are imposing correct standards as well. And
12 every now and again, in dealing with the skipper, he
13 drops off his mentoring and says, look, son, either get
14 your ship straight or find a new line of work.

15 The other characteristic, which he didn't say
16 - and this is an indelicate way to phrase - is the
17 squadron commander has to reserve the ability to be a
18 prick. And every now and again he has got to be a
19 prick. He is going to have to break somebody's heart,
20 because if he doesn't, bad things happen and people
21 die. So, in addition, I mean, he has the authority.
22 In the case of Greeneville, I think it is unfortunate
23 that he didn't step in and fix this boat or see that it
24 was badly broken.

1 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Okay. And part of, the final
2 thing I have is if you could sort of just, just so we
3 have appreciation of and understanding of your
4 background, just kind of lay it out for us, maybe
5 briefly. You know, where you, you know, where you went
6 to school and on from through various Navy assignments.

7 MR. BYRON: I spent 10 years as a sailor, -
8 joined the Navy, went through sonar school, and then to
9 a SOSUS station and reenlisted to get into submarines.
10 I qualified in the SS-244 as a second class sonarman.
11 I was selected for the Naval Enlisted Scientific
12 Education Program, which gave me four years at the
13 University of Washington, still on active duty and made
14 chief there. I have a Bachelor Science Degree in
15 Physical Oceanography. That took me to officer
16 candidate school. I received a regular USN commission.
17 And there was no room at the -inn in submarines. I
18 was 28 years old and too old to be allowed to go into
19 nuclear power program, so I spent two years building
20 and sailing the cruiser Fox, typical WestPac, qualified
21 fleet OD. I found my way back into submarines, went to
22 submarine school, and was going to diesel submarine
23 when the nuclear navy ran out of officers. This was
24 1968 when everybody went home, the whole submarine

1 workers leaving wholesale. And they needed some people
2 to man the missile submarines.

3 I spent three years in the submarine John Marshall
4 as assistant weapons officer and then weapons officer.

5 I did a tour in Washington for almost four years at
6 the Poseidon/Trident Headquarters, primarily working
7 submarine crews here at Cape Canaveral. I went to sea
8 again as a navigator in the submarine Trout, the
9 executive officer in Tang, and commanding officer of
10 the submarine Gudgeon. I went to National Work College
11 as a student. I went from there for two years as the
12 head diesel detailer and then served as the executive
13 assistant to the director of Office of Program
14 Appraisal, which is a key staff working for the
15 Secretary of the Navy directly. I then returned to the
16 Trident Program and headed the Training branch and then
17 I went back to the National Work College for a tour in
18 the department of military strategy. I rounded out my
19 37 years as Commanding Officer of naval Ordnance test
20 unit at Cape Canaveral.

21 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: This is Tom Roth-Roffy, the
22 Navy has had in recent years on the surface vessels,
23 the number of -- and unfortunately, we don't do
24 investigations when it is Navy on Navy, we just do it

1 when it is Navy on private. Do you know of any --

2 MR. BYRON: (Inaudible) the first one is you
3 don't know what is going on in submarine -- some is
4 classified, some -- But, one of the reasons I felt free
5 to be clinical -- is because they are --

6 (Tape was inaudible at the end.)